

Application No. 10/798,052
Preliminary Amendment "H"

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A device for grabbing a rail panel, the rail panel having a first and a second spaced apart rail, the first rail being parallel to and linked to the second rail, the grabbing device comprising:

a frame configured to be mounted on a rail panel, the rail panel having a first and a second spaced apart rail, the first rail being parallel to and linked to the second rail; and

a plurality of moveable elements coupled to said frame, said grabbing device being configured such that the frame can be mounted on the rail panel with the plurality of moveable elements located between the first rail and the second rail, said moveable elements being configured to move outwardly from a retracted position to an extended position in order to contact respective first and second parallel rails;

wherein, when said frame is mounted on the rail panel and said plurality of moveable elements move outwardly from the retracted position to the extended position so as to contact respective first and second parallel rails, said grabbing device is fixed to the rail panel such that the rail panel can be lifted by lifting the grabbing device. ~~first and second spaced apart rails.~~

2. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 1, further comprising a rotator connected to said frame, the rotator configured to rotate the rail panel when rail panel is fixed to the grabbing device.

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3. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 1, 2, ~~wherein said rotator is hydraulically operated, wherein said plurality of moveable elements comprises a first pair of moveable elements located at a first end of the frame and a second pair of moveable elements located at a second end of the frame, and further comprising a first mechanism coupled to the frame and the first pair of moveable elements for actuating the first pair of moveable elements and a second mechanism coupled to the frame and the second pair of moveable elements for actuating the second pair of moveable elements.~~

4. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 1, wherein said frame has further comprises notches sized and configured such that the first and second rails fit within respective notches when said frame is in contact with the first and second rails.

5. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 4, wherein said moveable elements comprise:

a first pair of pins, the first pair of pins being moveably connected ~~a first hydraulic cylinder to the frame located at a first end of said frame, said first hydraulic cylinder being connected to a first pair of pins; and~~

a second pair of pins, the second pair of pins being moveably connected ~~a second hydraulic cylinder to the frame located at a second end of said frame, said second hydraulic cylinder being connected to a second pair of pins;~~

~~wherein, when said hydraulically operated elements~~ first and second pair of pins ~~are moved by a mechanism coupled to the frame for moving said pins, actuated, said first hydraulic cylinder forces said first pair of pins into contact with an inside surface of each of the~~

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first and second rails; and wherein, ~~when said hydraulically operated elements are actuated, said second hydraulic cylinder forces said second pair of pins into contact with an inside surface of each of the first and second rails, thus fixing said frame to the rails.~~

6. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 5, ~~wherein said pins comprise metal having a diameter of at least 2 inches~~ wherein said mechanism for moving said pins comprises (i) a first hydraulic assembly coupled to the frame and to said first pair of pins and (ii) a second hydraulic assembly coupled to the frame and to said second pair of pins.

7. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1, further comprising a piece of equipment capable of lifting and transporting said device when said device is fixed to the rail panel.

8. (Original) The device of claim 7, wherein said piece of equipment has an operator, said operator being able to attach said device to the rail panel, lift the rail panel, and transport the rail panel without additional human assistance.

9. (Original) The device of claim 8, wherein said device can be attached to the rail panel at a point offset from a center of the panel.

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10. (Currently Amended) A modular device for grabbing ~~and moving~~ a rail panel, the rail panel ~~comprising~~ having a first and a second spaced apart rail, the first rail being parallel to and linked to the second rail, the device comprising:

a frame configured to be mounted on a rail panel, the rail panel having a first and a second spaced apart rail, the first rail being parallel to and linked to the second rail;

a rotator coupled to said frame; and

a first plurality of hydraulically operated elements coupled to said frame;

a second plurality of hydraulically operated elements coupled to the frame at a different location from the first plurality of hydraulically operated elements; and

first and second hydraulic assemblies coupled to said frame for actuating respective first and second pluralities of hydraulically operated elements,

wherein, when said hydraulically operated elements are actuated, said first and second pluralities of hydraulically operated elements contact the rail panel at different locations along the length of the rail panel, such that the modular device is fixed to the first and second spaced apart, parallel rails, and wherein said device can be connected to a piece of equipment capable of moving said device when it is fixed to the first and second rails.

11. (Original) The device of claim 10, wherein said rotator is hydraulically operated.

12. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 10, wherein said frame has further comprises notches sized and configured such that the first rail fits within respective notches and

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the second rail fits within respective notches when said frame is in contact with the first and second rails.

13. (Currently Amended) The device of claim ~~12~~ 10, wherein said hydraulically operated elements are pins, ~~and further comprising:~~

~~————— a first hydraulic cylinder located at a first end of said frame, said first hydraulic cylinder being connected to a first pair of said pins; and~~

~~————— a second hydraulic cylinder located at a second end of said frame, said second hydraulic cylinder being connected to a second pair of said pins;~~

~~————— wherein, upon actuation, said first hydraulic cylinder forces said first pair of pins into contact with an inside surface of each of the first and second rails, and said second hydraulic cylinder forces said second pair of pins into contact with an inside surface of each of the first and second rails, thus fixing said frame to the rails.~~

14. (Original) The device of claim 13, wherein said piece of equipment has an operator, said operator being able to attach said device to the rail panel, lift the rail panel, and transport the rail panel without additional human assistance.

15. (Original) The device of claim 14, wherein said device can be attached to the rail panel at a point offset from a center of the panel.

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16. (Currently Amended) A system for lifting and transporting a rail panel, the rail panel ~~comprising~~having a first and a second spaced apart rail, the first rail being parallel to and linked to the second rail, wherein each rail is attached to a plurality of ties, the system comprising.

a frame configured to be mounted on a rail panel, the rail panel having a first and a second spaced apart rail, the first rail being parallel to and linked to the second rail;

a plurality of hydraulically operated pins coupled to said frame at different locations on the frame such that, ~~wherein~~, when said hydraulically operated pins are actuated, said frame is fixed to the rail panel, wherein the pins contact the rail panel at different locations along the length of the rail panel ~~first and second spaced apart rails~~; and

a piece of equipment capable of lifting and transporting said frame while said frame is fixed to said rails.

17. (Original) The system of claim 16, wherein said piece of equipment provides hydraulic power to said hydraulically operated pins.

18. (Original) The system of claim 16, further comprising a rotator connected to said frame, wherein said piece of equipment provides hydraulic power to said hydraulically operated pins and to said rotator.

19. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 16, wherein said frame has ~~further comprises~~ notches sized and configured such that the first and second rails fit within respective notches when said frame is in contact with the first and second rails.

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20. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 16, furthering comprising:

a first hydraulic assembly ~~cylinder~~ located at a first end of said frame, said first hydraulic assembly ~~cylinder~~ being connected to a first pair of said pins; and

a second hydraulic assembly ~~cylinder~~ located at a second end of said frame, said second hydraulic assembly ~~cylinder~~ being connected to a second pair of said pins;

wherein, upon actuation, said first hydraulic assembly ~~cylinder~~ forces said first pair of pins into contact with an inside surface of each of the first and second rails and said second hydraulic assembly ~~cylinder~~ forces said second pair of pins into contact with an inside surface of each of the first and second rails, thus fixing said frame to the rails.

21. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein said pins comprise metal having a diameter of at least 2 inches.

22. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein said piece of equipment has an operator, said operator being able to attach said device to the rail panel, lift the rail panel, and transport the rail panel without additional human assistance.

23. (Original) The system of claim 22, wherein said device can be attached to the rail panel at a point offset from a center of the panel.

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24. (Currently Amended) A device for grabbing ~~and moving~~ a rail panel, the rail panel having ~~a first and a second spaced apart rails~~, the first rail being parallel to and linked to the second rail, the device comprising:

a frame configured to be mounted on a rail panel, the rail panel having a first and a second spaced apart rail, the first rail being parallel to the second rail, the frame having a length and being configured to receive portions of the first and second parallel rails in respective portions of the frame, wherein the frame is capable of being mounted on the rails; and

a first plurality of moveable elements coupled to a first end of said frame;

a second plurality of moveable elements coupled to a second end of said frame;

a first hydraulic assembly coupled to the first plurality of moveable elements and the first end of the frame; and

a second hydraulic assembly coupled to the second plurality of moveable elements and to the second end of the frame. each of the first and second plurality of moveable elements configured to move outwardly in order to contact the inside surface of the parallel rails of the rail assembly such that, when said moveable elements contact the parallel rails, the device is fixed to the rails.

25. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 24, wherein said frame has ~~further~~ comprises notches sized and configured such that the first and second rails fit within said notches when said frame is mounted on the first and second rails.

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26. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 25, wherein said moveable elements comprise:

~~a first pair of pins, the first pair of pins being connected to the~~ a first hydraulic cylinder ~~assembly located at a first end of said frame, said first hydraulic cylinder being connected to a first pair of pins; and~~

~~a second pair of pins, the second pair of pins being connected to the~~ a second hydraulic cylinder ~~assembly located at a second end of said frame, said second hydraulic cylinder being connected to a second pair of pins;~~

wherein, when said hydraulically-operated pins assemblies are actuated, said first hydraulic assembly ~~cylinder~~ forces said first pair of pins into contact with each of the first and second rails, and wherein, when said hydraulically-operated pins are actuated, said second hydraulic assembly ~~cylinder~~ forces said second pair of pins into contact with each of the first and second rails, thus fixing said frame to the rails.

27. (Original) The device of claim 24, further comprising a piece of equipment capable of lifting and moving said frame when said frame is attached to the rails, and wherein said piece of equipment has an operator, said operator being able to attach said device to the rail panel, lift the rail panel, and transport the rail panel without additional human assistance.

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28. (New) A device for grabbing and transporting a rail panel, the rail panel having first and second spaced-apart rails, the first rail being parallel to the second rail, the device comprising:

a frame configured to be mounted on the rail panel, the frame having a length;

a plurality of moveable elements coupled to said frame, said plurality of moveable elements being configured to move outwardly in order to contact respective first and second rails, such that when said plurality of moveable elements move outwardly, said device becomes sufficiently fixed to the first and second rails such that the rail panel can be lifted by lifting the device, wherein the device is configured such that a portion of said frame is located between said first and second rails when said frame is fixed to said rails; and

a mechanism configured to move said plurality of elements outwardly with respect to said portion of said frame located between said first and second rails.

29. (New) The device of claim 28, wherein said frame has notches that are sized and configured such that the first and second rails fit within respective notches when said frame is in contact with the first and second rails.

30. (New) The device of claim 28, wherein said moveable elements comprise pins that selectively extend outwardly from the frame in order to contact respective first and second parallel rails.

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31. (New) The device of claim 28, wherein said mechanism for moving said elements outwardly comprises a first hydraulic assembly coupled to the frame and to a first plurality of moveable elements coupled to said frame.

32. (New) The device of claim 31, wherein said mechanism for moving said elements further comprises a second hydraulic assembly coupled to the frame and to a second plurality of moveable elements coupled to said frame.

33. (New) A device as recited in claim 1, wherein said moveable elements comprise a first pair of pins and a second pair of pins.

34. (New) A device as recited in claim 1, further comprising a mechanism coupled to said frame for moving said moveable elements with respect to said frame.

35. (New) The device of claim 34, wherein said mechanism comprises a hydraulic assembly.

36. (New) A device as recited in claim 10, wherein said first plurality of hydraulically operated elements comprises a first plurality of pins, said second plurality of hydraulically operated elements comprises a second pair of pins, and wherein said first and second hydraulic assemblies comprise first and second hydraulic cylinders, respectively, wherein, upon actuation, said first hydraulic cylinder forces said first pair of pins into contact with an inside surface of each of the first and second rails, and said second hydraulic cylinder forces said second pair of

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pins into contact with an inside surface of each of the first and second rails, thereby fixing said frame to the rails.

37. (New) The device of claim 5, wherein the rail panel has a length, and wherein the first pair of pins are situated so as to contact a first location on the length of the rail panel, and the second pair of pins are situated so as to contact a second location on the length of the rail panel, the second location being different from the first.

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38. (New) A device for grabbing a rail panel, the rail panel having a length, the rail panel comprising a first and a second spaced apart rail, the first rail being parallel to and linked to the second rail, the grabbing device comprising:

a frame configured to be mounted on the rail panel; and

a plurality of moveable elements coupled to said frame, said moveable elements being configured to move outwardly in order to contact respective first and second parallel rails of the rail panel, wherein a first plurality of the moveable elements are located so as to contact a first location on the length of the rail panel, and a second plurality of the moveable elements are located so as to contact a second location on the length of the rail panel, the second location being different from the first location, wherein, when said first and second plurality of moveable elements move outwardly, said device is fixed to the first and second rails.

39. (New) The device of claim 38, wherein the first and second plurality of moveable elements are each a plurality of hydraulically operated pins.

40. (New) The device of claim 39, wherein the plurality of hydraulically operated pins comprise a first pair of pins and a second pair of pins, wherein the first pair of pins contact the first location on the length of the rail panel, and the second pair of pins contact the second location on the length of the rail panel.

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41. (New) The device of claim 40, further comprising a first hydraulic assembly coupled to the frame for moving the first pair of pins and a second hydraulic assembly coupled to the frame for moving the second pair of pins.

42. (New) The device of claim 38, wherein the frame has a first and a second spaced apart beam, the first beam being parallel to the second beam.